

CIA-Baiting

The hounding of CIA seems to be replacing the HUAC hunts this season; and enlists, one notices, a good many of the same enthusiastic sportsmen, ranging from far Left to Left-Center. At the moment Representative John Lindsay, silk-stockinged aspirant to Senator Jacob Javits' post as commander of the Republican Left, is leading the pack. In a particularly vicious article in the March *Esquire*, supplemented by tied-in TV appearances, Mr. Lindsay summons Congress to appoint a joint watchdog committee to "check on the activities" of CIA, to which purpose he has added his own to eighteen other bipartisan resolutions, already introduced, that make the same proposal.

In support of his public case, Mr. Lindsay offers three public arguments: CIA has meddled in the making of policy, the preserve of the State Department—which needs no check in Mr. Lindsay's book; it has bungled operations (Bay of Pigs, U-2, doing-in of Diem and what's-his-name, in that order of rhetorical firepower); its secret activities are incompatible with our system of government.

Even taken at face value, the case is weak. CIA has done pathetically little meddling on its own inspiration, even where meddling was desperately called for in the face of policy vacuums. In the U-2 affair, a supposedly notorious example, both President Eisenhower and Chairman Cannon of the House Appropriations Committee were brought to admit that Francis Powers' overflights were carried out with their full knowledge and explicit authorization. Besides the President and the National Security Council, it might be added, four congressional subcommittees are already charged with continuing surveillance of CIA, with prevention of unauthorized meddling prominent among their duties.

Like other agencies, CIA does indeed have too many failures on its record, though a good many of those charged to CIA's account are instances where CIA has been made to serve as fall guy for mistakes made by the White House or the State Department.

Its successes, moreover, should not be left out of the account: in the day-by-day gathering and analysis of intelligence data, in conspicuous actions such as the unseating of the Mossadegh regime in Iran or the Arbenz Communist regime in Guatemala, and in a good many other actions that must remain unsung. In any case, there are few eyes beamless enough to permit much comment on CIA's moles.

As for the third charge—that secret organizations are hard to reconcile with free, republican government—there is no easy answer. Senator Thomas Dodd has come forward with a stalwart defense of CIA operations in recent years—stressing, from his personal knowledge, the abilities and excellent conduct of John Richardson, CIA chief in South Vietnam until last October, who was exposed and knifed by Ambassador Lodge and the get-Diem clique in the State Department. Mr. Dodd reminds us that "we cannot compete with Communism if we confine ourselves to orthodox diplomacy and orthodox intelligence collection." Clandestine and irregular methods are necessary to meet the challenge of an enemy whose primary methods are clandestine, subversive and conspiratorial. Congress must adjust its normal prerogatives; "the members of Congress are all trustworthy, but a secret ceases to be a secret when it is shared by five hundred people."

Senator Dodd realizes, in defending CIA, that the real basis for the massive current campaign against that agency is not the arguments publicly offered and not its actual and rather numerous defects. What the CIA-baiters cannot abide is the fact that, with all its defects, there are probably more men and women with a genuine anti-Communist commitment in CIA than in any other agency of our government.